

ADJUTANT AND INSPECTOR GENERAL'S OFFICE.

Richmond, August 15, 1863.

GENERAL ORDERS, }
No. 112. }

I. A Court of Enquiry having been convened at Richmond on the 29th of July 1863, pursuant to paragraph XVII, Special Orders, No. 176, Adjutant and Inspector General's Office, current series, to examine into certain charges preferred against Major William Norris, Chief of the Signal Corps, and having made the required examination, the report of *facts proven*, with the *opinion* of the Court thereon, is published for the information of all concerned.

REPORT OF FACTS.

1. Major Norris was not intoxicated on the 31st of May 1863.
2. He did not reveal the alphabet of the signal corps on the 31st of May 1863.
3. The enemy knew or had opportunity to know the locality of the signal stations between City Point and Clairmont before the 31st of May 1863, none of which were disclosed to him by Major Norris on that day.
4. The dispatch shown to Captain Mulford by Major Norris was a private dispatch, conveying a report of successes at Vicksburg.
5. There was no improper intercourse between Major Norris and any officers or persons in the service of the enemy, on the 31st of May 1863.

OPINION.

The Court is of opinion that the charges in this case have been loosely made, and without due care and investigation, and should not be further entertained. The Court is also of opinion that the private and official character of Major Norris remains unaffected by this proceeding.

II. The charges, of which Major Norris has been thus fully exonerated by the Court, were made without that consideration which their serious character demanded, and in a manner that subjects the prosecutor, Lieut. R. A. Forbes, 2d Company Independent Signal Corps, to the grave censure of the department. The personal and official character of an officer is not to be lightly assailed. The accuser will be held to support his charges by evidence—and in an especial manner is he required to avoid creating the impression that the loose, unofficial statements of others are

facts within his own knowledge. The greatest care and consideration should be manifested by those preferring charges, particularly when the reputation, personal and professional, of a superior, is called in question.

III. The Court of Enquiry, of which Lieut. Col. George Deas, Adjutant General's department, was president, is hereby dissolved.

By order.

S. COOPER,

Adjutant and Inspector General.